

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 and 25-41 are currently pending. Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 6-23 and 25-41 are allowed.

Applicants have amended claim 25 to correct a grammatical error. The amendment has no effect on the scope of the claim. As such, claim 25, and claims 26-28 that depend therefrom, are allowable.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferlatte (U.S. Patent No. 5,311,090). In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Base (U.S. Patent No. 6,485,257).

Claim 1 defines an apparatus that comprises a driven element including a housing having an outer surface. The outer surface has a first raised portion and a first non-raised portion. The first non-raised portion at least partially surrounds the first raised portion. The first raised and first non-raised portions define a substantially continuous first surface pattern. The apparatus also includes a driving element operably coupled to the driven element and a shield coupled to the driving element such that the shield at least partially covers at least one of the driven element and the driving element. The shield includes an outer surface that has a second raised portion and a second non-raised portion. The second non-raised portion at least partially surrounds the second raised portion. The second raised and second non-raised portions define a substantially continuous second surface pattern that is substantially the same as the first surface pattern.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, Ferlatte does not teach or suggest a driven element including a housing having a first raised portion and a first non-raised portion that define a substantially continuous first surface pattern and a shield including an outer surface having a second raised portion and a second non-raised portion that define a substantially continuous

second surface pattern. The Examiner states that Ferlatte discloses a housing and shield that have the same “look,” and it would be obvious to repeat or apply patterns to the outside of the housing for aesthetic reasons. However, the surface patterns of the present invention are not simply aesthetic. The surface patterns substantially increase the stiffness of the structure, thus allowing for the use of injection-molded components. The raised and non-raised portions reduce the likelihood of warpage during manufacturing. Warpage is a common problem when manufacturing large thin-walled structures. The increased stiffness provided by the raised and non-raised portions also reduces the vibration of the shield and the noise produced by the vibration. Because the raised and non-raised portions are not purely aesthetic, the disclosure of Ferlatte that the housing and shield have a similar “look” does not teach or suggest the use of raised and non-raised portions. Rather, the teaching of a similar look would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the simplest configuration, which would be a flat driven element housing and a flat shield.

For these and other reasons, Ferlatte does not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent claim 1.

Base discloses an apparatus that includes a motor with a housing 32 and a driven member having a housing 26. The Examiner states that the motor housing and the driven member housing have the same “look,” but concedes that Base does not teach or suggest a shield having raised and non-raised portions. The Examiner argues that a teaching of a similar look and feel would make obvious the raised and non-raised portions. However, as stated above, the raised and non-raised portions are not purely aesthetic. Rather, they stiffen the structure to allow for injection molded components, reduce the likelihood of warpage, and reduce vibration and noise.

For these and other reasons, neither Ferlatte nor Base teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent claim 1. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is allowable. In addition, claims 4 and 5, which depend from claim 1, are allowable for these and other reasons.

The Examiner rejected claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Base.

Claims 2 and 3 originally depended from claim 1. Claims 2 and 3 were rewritten in independent form in response to a prior indication from the Office that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. As such, claims 2 and 3 contain all of the limitations of claim 1 and are allowable for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments and allowance of claims 1-23 and 25-41.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TL J Otterlee', written over the printed name.

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